

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

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S E C R E T ABU DHABI 1911

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MMOL, TC

SUBJECT: UAE DEFENSE FORCES RENEWS REQUESTS FOR FMS SALES

REF: ABU DHABI 1459

1. I WAS ASKED TO CALL ON SHAIKH KHALIFA, CROWN PRINCE OF ABU DHABI AND RECENTLY APPOINTED AS DEPUTY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF UAE DEFENSE FORCES, YESTERDAY. WHEN I ARRIVED I FOUND COFS UAE DEFENSE FORCES GENERAL AL-KHALDI WITH HIM. SHAIKH KHALIFA SAID HE HAD HEARD I WAS LEAVING SHORTLY AND WANTED TO CATCH ME BEFORE I WENT TO DISCUSS CERTAIN MILITARY ACQUISITION DECISIONS THEY HAD REACHED.

2. KHALIFA SAID PLANNING FOR NEW UAE DEFENSE FORCE WAS GOING AHEAD WELL. COMMITTEES HAD WORKED OUT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW UNIFORM, EMBLEMS, UNIFORM PAY SCALES AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS, AND THESE WOULD BE ACTED ON SHORTLY. AT SAME TIME DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS HAD REACHED CERTAIN DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO MODERNIZING AND RATIONALIZING DEFENSE FORCE WEAPONS INVENTORY. SHAIKH KHALIFA, WITH PERIODIC EXPLANATORY INTERJECTIONS FROM GENERAL KHALDI, THEN ENUMERATED FOLLOWING NEEDS WHICH THEY HOPED COULD BE ACQUIRED THROUGH FMS.

A. IN DESIGNING NEW UNIFORM, UAEDF DESIRED TO GET US ARMY WEBBING (BELT, AMMUNITION POUCHES, SHOULDER STRAPS AND SMALL HAVERSACK). IT WOULD NEED 30,000 PIECES. THIS WAS URGENT REQUEST BECAUSE UAEG WISHED TO HAVE ITS TROOPS

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DRESSED UP IN FULL NEW OUTFIT IN TIME FOR FIFTH NATIONAL

DAY MILITARY PARADE DECEMBER 2. KHALDI SAID THEY WOULD PROBABLY WISH TO HAVE WEBBING AIRFREIGHTED OUT TO MAKE SURE THEY RECEIVED IT IN TIME. HE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF WORD COULD BE GOT TO HIM BEFORE I LEFT AS TO WHETHER WE COULD MEET THIS REQUEST.

B. NEW INFANTRY RIFLE. SHAIKH KHALIFA SAID MOST UAE TROOPS WERE NOW EQUIPPED WITH HEAVY ENGLISH RIFLE WHICH FIRED LARGE-CALIBRE ROUND. THEY WISHED TO UP-DATE AND STANDARDIZE THROUGHOUT UAE WITH WEAPON THAT WAS LIGHTER AND WHICH FIRED LIGHTER AMMUNITION. THEY WOULD LIKE TO ACQUIRE M-16. THEY WOULD NEED 30,000 PIECES.

C. TRAINING.

GENERAL KHALDI SAID THAT AS MILITARY MAN WHO HAD HIMSELF BENEFITTED FROM US MILITARY TRAINING, HE WANTED TO GET SOME UAEDF OFFICERS TO STATES ON TRAINING. DESIRABLE FIRST STEP IN HIS VIEW WOULD BE TO SEND SMALL GROUP OF OFFICERS ON ORIENTATION TOUR OF US INSTALLATIONS. IDEA WOULD BE TO GET FIRST-HAND EXPOSURE TO US MILITARY TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS AS WELL AS TO SEE WEAPONS DEMONSTRATED. GENERAL KHALDI HOPED TOUR COULD BE SET UP FOR 5-7 UAE OFFICERS, FOR SOMETIME THIS FALL IF POSSIBLE. KHALDI SAID SHAIKH SULTAN BIN ZAYED (NOW COMMANDER OF WESTERN SECTOR FORCES) MIGHT WISH TO HEAD UAE GROUP.

D. FINALLY, SHAIKH KHALIFA SAID, HE WISHED THE USG TO RECONSIDER QUESTION OF TOWS FOR UAE DEFENSE FORCE. HE SAID HE HAD RECALLED CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WE HAD EXPLAINED MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR USG TO RESPOND POSITIVELY YEAR AGO, BUT HE HOPED WE WOULD RECONSIDER MATTER. SINCE LAST YEAR, SAID KHALIFA, UAE HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS TOWARD PUTTING ITS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT ON SENSIBLE BASIS. UAE DID NOT NEED OR WANT LARGE FORCES, BUT IT DID WISH AND FELT IT HAD LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO SEE THAT WHAT FORCES IT DID HAVE WERE WELL-EQUIPPED. SHAIKH KHALIFA SAID UAE HAD NEED FOR SOME FORM OF UP-TO-DATE ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY AND RATHER THAN BUY TANKS IT BELIEVED IT BETTER TO HAVE INFANTRY ANTI-TANK WEAPON. SHAIKH KHALIFA SAID HE VERY MUCH HOPED USG COULD BE RESPONSIVE TO THIS REQUEST.

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3. I REMINDED SHAIKH KHALIFA AND GENERAL KHALDI OF DIFFICULTIES WE FACED ON ARMS REQUESTS FOR X.R STATES BUT SAID WE NEVERTHELESS WISHED TO BE HELPFUL WHERE WE COULD. I UNDERTOOK TO EXPLORE THESE REQUESTS WHEN I WAS BACK IN WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATIONS.

4. AS I DEPARTED, GENERAL KHALDI DREW ME ASIDE AND SAID HE PERSONALLY HOPED US WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE POSITIVE RESPONSE ON TOWS. HE HIMSELF WANTED TO KEEP SIZE OF UAEDF AND WEAPONS IT ACQUIRED TO WITHIN REASONABLE BOUNDS (HE AGAIN MENTIONED HIS DESIRE TO KEEP UAEDF AWAY FROM ACQUISITION OF TANKS) AND BEST WAY TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND IN THIS RESPECT WOULD BE FOR UAE'S FRIENDS TO BE RESPONSIVE ON NEEDS WHICH WERE IN FACT REASONABLE AND JUSTIFIED. KHALDI WAS CLEARLY IN NO DOUBT PERSONALLY THAT TOWS FELL INTO LATTER CATEGORY. HE SAID IT WAS UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT UAEDF TO FOREGO MODERN ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY ENTIRELY AND IF HE PERSONALLY WERE TO RECOMMEND SUCH COURSE UAEDF WOULD MERELY IGNORE HIS ADVICE AND ACQUIRE WEAPONRY THAT WOULD MAKE LESS SENSE AND WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE FAR MORE EXPENSIVE. HE SAID HE FRANKLY COULD NOT ACCEPT ARGUMENT THAT BECAUSE THERE WERE NO TANKS LOOMING ON UAE'S BORDERS AT PRESENT UAE DID NOT HAVE NEED FOR ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY. ONE COULD AS WELL GO ON TO SAY THAT BECAUSE UAE ENJOYED EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH ALL ITS NEIGHBORS AT PRESENT IT REALLY DIDN'T NEED ANY WEAPONS AT ALL.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: I HOPE SOME INDICATION AS TO WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO MEET UAEDF URGENT REQUEST FOR WEBBING CAN BE SENT OUT TO ME FOR RELAY TO SHAIKH KHALIFA BEFORE I LEAVE JULY 20. ON OTHER ITEMS, I WOULD ALSO HOPE WE CAN BE RESPONSIVE. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO DEFER FORMULATING RESPONSE ON TOWS UNTIL I AM IN WASHINGTON EARLY AUGUST. HOWEVER, WE WOULD HOPE NEITHER M-16S NOR TRAINING REQUEST POSE SERIOUS PROBLEM AND THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO CONVEY POSITIVE RESPONSE ON THESE ITEMS TO UAEG JVVY SOON AS POSSIBLE.
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